

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action dated June 6, 2005. Claims 1-21 are pending in the patent application. Claims 1, 9, 10, 11 and 12 have been amended. No new matter has been added by any of the amendments made herein. Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9-13 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Claims 3, 4, 8, 14-17 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicant respectfully submits, at least for the reasons set forth below, that the rejections have been overcome or are improper. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the patentability of claims 1-21 for the following reasons.

Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9-13 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. patent application publication 2003/0093474 to Kakuta et al. ("Kakuta").

Claims 1, 9, 10, 11 and 12 are the sole independent claims. Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said apparatus includes: first record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users; second record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to said plurality of users; first generation means for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space capable of being utilized by said plurality of users using said other information processing apparatuses; second generation means for generating a second set of information including an information list showing said community a first user participates in from information relating to said plurality of users; a display which displays at least a portion of the virtual space and said information list; first output control means for controlling the output to said other information processing apparatuses, of said first set of information generated by said first generation means, and said second set of information generated by said second generation means, and an input control means for controlling the input from said other information processing apparatuses, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by a said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among the second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space generated by said first generation means, wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where

Appl. No. 09/923,624
Reply to Office Action of June 7, 2005

the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation of said second user, within the virtual space, wherein said first record control means controls the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means, and wherein said second record control means controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means.

Claim 9 is directed to An information processing method for an information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said method includes: recording information relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users; recording information relating to said plurality of users of said community; generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space utilizable by a plurality of said users using other said information processing apparatuses; generating a second set of information including a table showing said community participated in by a first user of said plurality of users; displaying at least a portion of the virtual space and said table on a display; controlling an output to said other information processing apparatuses, of said first set of information and said second set of information controlling the input from said other information processing apparatuses, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among said second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space, controlling the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means, wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation of said second user, within the virtual space, and, controlling the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by the processing in said input control step.

Claim 10 is directed to an information processing computer program for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said computer program includes: a first recording control step for controlling the recording of information

Appl. No. 09/923,624
Reply to Office Action of June 7, 2005

relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users; a second recording control step for controlling the recording of information relating to said plurality of users in said community; a first generation step for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space utilizable by a plurality of said users using other said information processing apparatuses; a second generation step for generating a second set of information including information on a table showing said community participated in by said first user, from information relating to said plurality of said users; displaying at least a portion of the virtual space and said table on a display; an output control step for controlling an output to said other information processing apparatuses, of said first set of information generated by processing in said first generation step, and said second set of information generated by processing in said second generation step; and an input control step for controlling an input from said other information processing apparatuses, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by a said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among said second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space generated by the processing in said first generation step; wherein said first recording control step controls the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said input control means, wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation of said second user, within the virtual space, and wherein said second recording control step controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by the processing in said input control step.

Claim 11 is directed to a service providing system which comprises a first information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, and a second information processing apparatus possessed by a user, said first information processing apparatus includes: first record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to a community composed of a plurality of users; second record control means for controlling the recording of information relating to said plurality of users in said community; first generation means for generating a first set of information corresponding to

Appl. No. 09/923,624
Reply to Office Action of June 7, 2005

a virtual space capable of being utilized by said plurality of users using said other information processing apparatuses; second generation means for generating a second set of information including a list showing said community a first user participates in, from information relating to said plurality of users; first output control means for controlling output to said second set of information processing apparatus, of said first set of information generated from said first generation means, and said second set of information generated by said second generation means; first input control means for controlling an input from said second set of information processing apparatus, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user, from among a second set of information generated by said second generation means, within said virtual space generated by said first generation means; wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation of said second user, within the virtual space, wherein said first record control means controls the recording of information relating to said community shown by said third set of information, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said first input control means, and said second record control means controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user, on the basis of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said first input control means, and said second information processing apparatus includes: second input control means for controlling the input of said first set of information and said second set of information with outputs controlled by said first output control means; display control means for controlling the display of at least a portion of the virtual space, said first set of information and said second set of information with outputs controlled by said second input control means; third input control means for controlling the input of said fourth set of information showing the operation for supplying to said second user said third set of information showing a specified community from among said second set of information within said virtual space showing said first set of information, and said third set of information was supplied by said first user after referring to said first set of information and said second set of information whose display is controlled by said display control means; and second output control means for controlling the output to said

Appl. No. 09/923,624
Reply to Office Action of June 7, 2005

first set of information processing apparatus, of said fourth set of information with inputs controlled by said third input control means.

Claim 12 is directed to an information processing apparatus for exchanging information with other information processing apparatuses over a network, said apparatus includes: a first recorder that records information relating to at least one community composed of a plurality of users; a second recorder that records information for each of said plurality of users; a first information generator that generates a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space, wherein the virtual space is capable of being utilized by said plurality of users using said other information processing apparatuses; a second information generator that generates a second set of information including an information list showing said community a first user participates in based on said information relating to each of said plurality of users, wherein each of said communities on said information list are represented by an image; a display screen that displays at least a portion of said virtual world and said information list; an output controller for controlling the output of said first set of information, and said second set of information to the other information processing apparatuses; and an input controller for controlling the communication of a third set of information regarding a specific community on said information list from said first user to a second user within said virtual space; wherein the third set of information is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation of said second user, within the virtual space, wherein said first recorder controls the recording of said third set of information; and said second recorder controls the recording of information relating to said first user and said second user; and wherein said first user uses said input controller to move the image of said specific community from said information list to said second user within said virtual space on said display screen.

Kakuta is directed to a group contact system which enables members of a group that communicate over the internet, such as in a chat room, to obtain information regarding the other members of the group. Further, Kakuta enables internet users, and specifically, users in a chat room to obtain information regarding each user in the chat room so that one or more of the users may contact one or more of the other users using communication means outside of the internet, such as by telephone or facsimile. See, Kakuta, Abstract.

Appl. No. 09/923,624
Reply to Office Action of June 7, 2005

At a minimum, Kakuta does not disclose, teach or suggest a third set of information showing a specified community that is represented by an icon, where the first user can deliver the third set of information to said second user by dragging and dropping the icon onto a representation associated with said second user within the virtual space as required, in part, by the claimed invention, as fully supported in the specification. See, Specification, for example, page 28, line 14 through page 29, line 2. This allows the user to participate in a user community by way of an easy operation (e.g., dragging or dropping) within the virtual space. See, Specification, page 2, lines 14-16. Indeed, the Patent Office appears to acknowledge same. See, Office Action, page 6, lines 12-13.

For at least these reasons, Kakuta does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter as defined in amended claims 1, 9, 10, 11 and 12 and the claims that depend therefrom. Therefore, the anticipation rejection in view of Kakuta should be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 4, 8, 14-17 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kakuta. Claims 3, 4 and 8 depend from amended claim 1. Claims 14-17 and 21 depend from amended claim 12. Therefore, claims 3, 4, 8, 14-17 and 21 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended claims 1 and 12. Therefore, the obviousness rejection in view of Kakuta should be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicits reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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